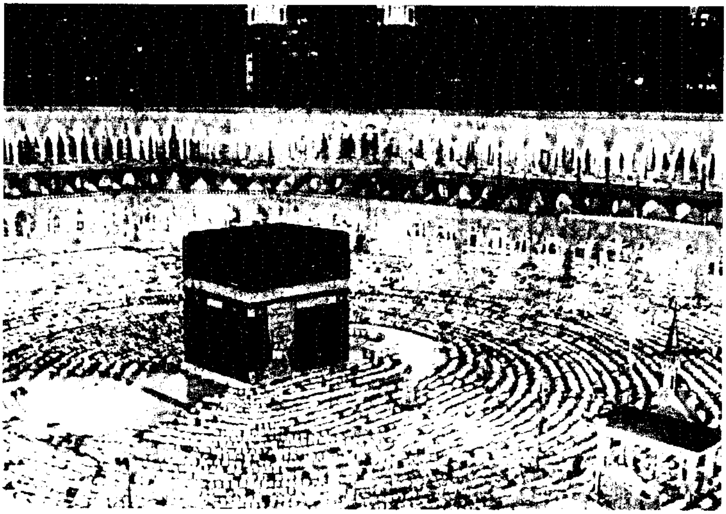
MUHARRAM AND ÂSHURA

Virtues and Laws



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author's Foreword

A booklet dealing with the same subject matter has already been published in English. One of my students prepared it and I endorsed its content after he read it to me. This is however the first time that I am personally writing on this subject. May Allaah ﷻ accept this effort and make it a means of salvation for me as well as a means of guidance for the Ummah. Aameen.

Those aspects regarding Muharram and âshura which are proven from Quraan, Hadith and from the views of the research scholars have been mentioned. Furthermore those facts that are incorrect and baseless but has become famous among the Ulama and Laymen have also been highlighted so that one refrains from accepting them and mentioning them.

Fadhlur Rahmaan A'zami
Azaadville
South Africa

24 Shawwaal 1421
19 January 2001

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

We praise Allaah ﷻ and invoke His choicest mercies and blessings on Rasulullaah ﷺ

[The Virtue of Certain Places and Days

y His perfect choice and complete power over everything, Allaah ﷻ has defined arious ranks among His creation. Allaah ﷻ says in the Qur'aan, **"Your Rabb reates whatever He wills and He selects. People have no choice in the matter. llaah is Pure and Exalted above all partners that people ascribe to Him."** [1]

'lema renowned for their deep research are of the opinion that Allaah ﷻ has attached)ecial virtue to certain times and places. These times and places therefore possess)ecial virtue within themselves and not because of their relationship with)mething else. Allaama Ibn Qayyim (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned this at the eginning of his book "Zaadul Ma'aad" and Allaama Shabbier Ahmad Uthmaani Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also mentioned it briefly in his commentary of Bukhari ntitled "Taqreere Bukhari". To prove this point, he asks whether rose water and rine are the same entities with only a difference in smell. He answers this himself by sserting that it is obvious that the two are completely different entities. Just as these vo things are completely different, so too is the difference between Hadhrat Moosa ؑ and Firoun. The same difference exists between Hadhrat Muhammad ﷺ and Abu ihal. Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Qaasim Nanotwi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) also ipports this opinion. This opinion is most correct and anyone opposing it is ertainly mistaken.

Laylatul Qadr the same as every night of the year? Of course not! Does Laylatul adr receive its special virtue because of the Ibaadah (worship) carried out on this ight? Certainly not! It is because of the special virtue within this night that Ibaadah carried out with added importance. Similarly, the month of Ramadhaan does not erive its special virtue because the Qur'aan was revealed during this month. It is ither because of the special virtue given to this month that it was chosen for the velation of the Qur'aan. Of course, the fact that the Qur'aan was revealed in the ionth of Ramadhaan does lend added virtue to the month.

Surah Qasas (Surah 28), verse 68.

It is from several verses of the Qur'aan that Allaama Ibn Qayyim (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has deduced that certain places and times have added virtue within themselves and not because of their relationship with another factor. Among these verses is the verse of Surah An'aam[2] where Allaah ﷻ says, **"Allaah ﷻ knows best where (i.e. with whom) He wishes to entrust His message."**[3] From mankind, Allaah ﷻ has granted special virtue to the Ambiya (Prophets) (A.S) because they were selected to convey His messages to the masses. Furthermore, Allaah ﷻ has also granted some Ambiya (A.S) added virtue over the others. There is thus a hierarchy among the Ambiya (A.S) themselves. Allaah ﷻ states in Surah Baqara,[4] **"These are the messengers, some of whom We have given excellence over others."**

From among the days, Allaah ﷻ has given special virtue to the days of Ramadhaan and the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. From among the nights, special virtue has been given to the night of Qadr (Power) and the night of Baraa'ah (15th night of Shabaan). It is also common knowledge that Makkah Mukarrama and Madinah Munawwara enjoy special virtue above other places on earth. The same applies for other times and places.

The month of Muharram and the day of Aashura

The Ahadeeth mention that the month of Muharram and the day of Aashura (10th of Muharram) enjoy special virtues that other days do not possess. It is with regard to these virtues that this booklet has been prepared. The Qur'aan mentions the virtue of the "As'hurul Hurum" ("The Sacred Months"). Among these months is also the month of Muharram, as specified by the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth of Rasulullaah ﷺ.

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[2] Surah An'aam (Surah 6), verse 124.
[3] Taqreere Bukhari Pg. 84, printed in Dabhel, India.
[4] Surah 2, verse 253.

A note of caution

Although certain virtues of Muharram and the day of Aashura have been mentioned in the Ahadeeth, there are many baseless beliefs concerning this month and day that have spread in the Ummah. The Muhadditheen (scholars of Ahadeeth) find no substantiation for many of the beliefs concerning Muharram and the day of Aashura even though such beliefs are regarded as common knowledge. It is therefore necessary to be cautious in this regard. One of the objectives of this booklet is to bring such unsubstantiated beliefs to light.

Our Shari'ah is founded on the Qur'aan and the practices of Rasulullaah ﷺ. Just as the injunctions of the Shari'ah are grounded in these two sources, so too are the virtues of deeds. No due is given to fabricated narrations in this regard. Of course, when the narrations of the Sahabah ؓ and the Taabi'een[5] (Rahmatullaahi Alayhim) reach us through reliable sources, their word will be placed on the same platform as the Ahadeeth concerning matters about which they were unable to form their own opinion. Because they cannot form their own opinion concerning the virtues of deeds, their narrations about such virtues will be regarded as being heard from Rasulullaah ﷺ.

Although the injunctions of the Shari'ah are also sourced from Ijmaa[6] and Qiyaas[7], these two sources cannot be used to prove the virtue of any deed, place or time. To prove such virtues, a clear narration from Allaah ﷻ or His Rasul ﷺ is required. When such a narration is found, it is the duty of the Muhadditheen to judge its authenticity. It is therefore necessary for the person presenting such a narration to also furnish a reference for such a narration so that it can be verified. The Muhadditheen have written many books concerning those Ahadeeth which are not authentic but have become popular among Muslims. Among such books are "Al Maqaasidul Hasana" written by Allaama Sakhaawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay), "Kashful Khifa" by Allaama Ajlooni (Rahmatullaahi Alay) and "At Tadhkira" by Imaam Zarkashi (Rahmatullaahi Alay).

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[5] Muslims who saw the Sahabah .

[6] Consensus of opinion among the jurists.

[7] Analytical deduction of the jurists.

The Month of Muharram

Of the twelve months of the Islaamic calendar, four months are regarded as sacred months. These are Muharram, Rajab, Dhul Qa'da and Dhul Hijjah. Because of their special significance, the rewards for good deeds are increased during these months. At the same time, one should take care to abstain from sins during these months because their consequences are also significantly worse. This is the opinion of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﵄ as well. Similar is the case with Makkah Mukarrama, where the rewards of good deeds are increased and the punishment for sins is more severe[8]. Hadhrat Qataadah (Rahmatullaahi Alay) says, "The sin for an injustice during these months is greater than the same sin during other months. Although injustice always remains a major sin, Allaah ﷻ is at liberty to add gravity to whatever He pleases." He states further, "Allaah ﷻ has accorded special virtue to some of His creation above the rest. He has given special virtue to the messengers from among the angels and to the messengers from mankind. He has given special virtue to His speech over that of others and He has selected the Masaajid to grant His special merit from among all other places. From among the months, He has accorded special virtue to the month of Ramadhaan and the four sacred months. From among the days, He has selected the day of Jumu'ah (Friday) and from among the nights, He has selected the night of Qadr for special merit. One should therefore attach value to those things that Allaah ﷻ has given value. Intelligent people realise that the things that are really important are those things to which Allaah ﷻ has granted importance."[9]

It is therefore necessary that Muslims exert themselves to carry out good deeds during the months of Muharram, Rajab, Dhul Qa'da and Dhul Hijjah. Imaam Jasaas Raazi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) writes in his book "Ahkaamul Qur'aan" that the speciality of these months is that whoever engages in Ibaadah will be inspired to engage in Ibaadah during the remaining months of the year as well. Similarly, the person who makes an effort to abstain from sin during these months will find it easy to abstain from sin during the other months of the year.

Therefore, failure to derive benefit from these months is a great loss indeed.[10]

[8] Tafseer Ibn Katheer Vol. 2 Pg. 554
[9] Tafseer Ibn Katheer Vol. 2 Pg. 554.
[10] Ma'ariful Qur'aan Vol. 4 Pg. 373.

Although the Qur'aan does not specify which months are the sacred months, authentic Ahadeeth specify them. Hadhrat Abu Bakrah ﷺ narrates that Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "Time has revolved and returned to how it was when Allaah ﷻ created the heavens and the earth. The year has twelve months, four of them being sacred. Three are consecutive viz. Dhul Qa'da, Dhul Hijjah and Muharram. The fourth one is the Rajab of the Mudhar[11] tribe, which falls between Jumada (i.e. Jumadal Ukhra) and Sha'baan."[12]

This hadith makes reference to a verse of Surah Taubah[13] in which Allaah ﷻ says, **"Postponing (and preponing) the sacred months is only an excess in disbelief by which the disbelievers go astray. During some years they declare these months lawful while during other years they declare them sacred so as to complete the count of the months that Allaah made sacred."** The disbelievers of pagan Arabia used to postpone and prepone the sacred months for ulterior motives. For example, when they wanted to fight during the month of Muharram, they would declare Muharram to be Safar, telling people, that for that year Muharram will follow Safar rather than come before it. In this manner, they would alter the sequence of the sacred months. It was since the period of Hadhrat Ibraheem عليه السلام that waging war was forbidden in these four months.

Although the pagan Arabs revered these months, they altered their sequence merely to fulfil their whims to fight. As a result of this constant alteration, no one could determine with certainty which month they were in. However, it was on the 10th year after Hijrah that Rasulullaah ﷺ made the above announcement, declaring that the months had returned to the sequence that Allaah ﷻ ordained when He created the universe. During the year before this declaration, Rasulullaah ﷺ sent Hadhrat Abu Bakr ﷺ as the Ameer of Hajj. Although the month in which Hadhrat Abu Bakr ﷺ led the Hajj was accepted as Dhul Hijjah, it was actually Dhul Qa'da because of the calendar alterations during the period of ignorance. Nevertheless, when Rasulullaah ﷺ performed Hajj during the 10th year after Hijrah, the month that everyone regarded as Dhul Hijjah was really Dhul Hijjah. It was perhaps for this reason that Rasulullaah ﷺ postponed his Hajj for this year. It was on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah on the plains of Mina that Rasulullaah ﷺ made the above declaration.

[11] The month of Rajab has been linked to the Mudhar tribe because they attached great importance to this month.
[12] Bukhari Vol. 2 Pg. 632.
[13] Surah 9, verse 37.

When he said, "The year has twelve months, four of them being sacred", Rasulullaah ﷺ was referring to verse 36 of Surah Taubah (Surah 9) in which Allaah ﷻ states, **"Indeed the number of months according to Allaah is twelve months in the Book of Allaah (the Lowhul Mahfoodh) from the day He created the heavens and the earth. Of these four are sacred. This is the straight religion, so do not oppress yourselves in these months."** The specific names of these months have been mentioned in the Ahadeeth.

Although fighting (in battle) was prohibited during these months, this injunction was later abrogated. While some Ulema state that fighting is completely permissible during these months, others maintain that Muslims should abstain from waging war during these months unless in self-defence or when a battle continues into these months. Therefore, the verses of the Qur'aan that cite the prohibition of fighting during these months applied only to the early days of Islaam. This injunction was later repealed. For further details, one may refer to the commentary of the above verses of Surah Taubah in "Ma'aariful Qur'aan" of Mufti Shafi (Rahmatullaahi Alay).

Fasting During the Month of Muharram

Another virtue of Muharram is that the fasts during this month are second in excellence only to the fasts of Ramadhaan. Although every day and every month belongs to Allaah ﷻ, Rasulullaah ﷺ has mentioned that Muharram is Allaah's month. By saying this, Rasulullaah ﷺ intended to emphasise the added auspiciousness of this month.

Hadhrat Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullaah ﷺ said[14], "After the fasts of Ramadhaan, the best fasts are those observed during Allaah's month of Muharram."

Hadhrat Ali رضي الله عنه narrates that he was once sitting with Rasulullaah ﷺ when a person asked, "O Rasulullaah ﷺ! Besides the month of Ramadhaan, in which month would you advise me to fast?" Rasulullaah ﷺ replied, "If you wish to fast in any month after Ramadhaan, then fast in the month of Muharram because this is Allaah's month. It has a day in which Allaah ﷻ had accepted the repentance of a nation and in which Allaah ﷻ will accept the repentance of others also."[15] The nation whose Taubah (repentance) was accepted on a day in this month was the Bani Israa'eel. It was on the 10th of Muharram (Aashura) that the Bani Israa'eel (the Jews) and Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام were saved from Fir'oun and his army. The details of this are soon to follow.

[14] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 157. Imaam Tirmidhi has stated that the hadith is authentic.

[15] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 157. Although this hadith is somewhat weak, it is perhaps because of the strength of the hadith of Hadhrat Abu Hurayra before it that Imaam Tirmidhii (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned that it is also sound.

Some Ulema are of the opinion that the month of Muharram has been given prominence because of the day of Aashura. Others even say that when the Ahadeeth speak about the virtue of Muharram, they actually refer to the day of Aashura and not the entire month of Muharram. Therefore, in their estimation, it is only the fast of the day of Aashura that has special virtue and not the fasts of the entire month of Muharram. The details of this can be found in the book "Arfush Shazi" which is a commentary of Tirmidhi.

The Fast of the Day of Aashura (10th of Muharram)

The 10th of Muharram is a significant day in Islaamic history. Rasulullaah ﷺ used to fast on this day and commanded the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم also to fast. The fast of this day was initially Waajib (compulsory), but the compulsion was waived when the fasts of Ramadhaan were made Fardh. The Muslims then had a choice to either fast on this day or not to fast. However, the virtues of this fast have been expounded in the Ahadeeth. Among these is the virtue that the previous year's sins are forgiven.

Initially the Muslims only fasted on the 10th but before his demise, Rasulullaah ﷺ mentioned that if he were alive the next year, he would fast on the 9th as well. Sadly, Rasulullaah ﷺ did not live to see the following Muharram. It is therefore necessary for Muslims to fast on the 9th and 10th of Muharram or on the 10th and 11th. Because certain narrations mention that one should fast a day before Aashura and a day after, it is best for a Muslim to fast on the 9th, 10th and 11th of Muharram (three days). However, to fast on only the 10th is Makrooh Tanzihi (i.e. an act disliked by the Shari'ah).

The history of this fast stems from the time of Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام. Because it was on the day of Aashura that Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام and the Bani Israa'eel were saved from Fir'oun, Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام fasted on this day to express his gratitude to Allaah ﷻ. The Bani Israa'eel also did the same and this day was always regarded as a day of fasting among the Bani Israa'eel. Emulating this practice of the Jews, the Quraysh also fasted on this day. Rasulullah ﷺ also kept this fast (in Makkah). When Rasulullaah ﷺ arrived in Madinah, he asked the Jews why they observed this fast. They informed him that they fasted because it was on this day that Allaah ﷻ delivered them from the tyranny of Fir'oun. Rasulullaah ﷺ said to them that the Muslims are closer to Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام than they are. Therefore, Rasulullaah ﷺ fasted on this day and instructed the Muslims to do so as well.

Although Rasulullaah ﷺ initially preferred to do things according to the ways of the Ahlul Kitaab (Jews and Christians) to win them over to Islaam, Allaah ﷻ later commanded him to oppose their ways. It was then that Rasulullaah ﷺ announced that he would fast on the 9th as well if he lived until the next Muharram. It is because the Jews fast only on the 10th that the Shari'ah regards fasting on the 10th only as a Makrooh Tanzihi (disliked) act. Muslims ought to oppose their ways and fast on the 9th as well[16]. We shall now discuss the Ahadeeth pertaining to the fast of Aashura.

Ahadeeth Concerning the Fast of Aashura

Hadhrat Aa'isha ؓ narrates that before the fasts of Ramadhaan were made Fardh, people fasted on the day of Aashura. They also shrouded the Kabah on this day. However, when the fasts of Ramadhaan were made Fardh, Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "Those who wish to fast (on the day of Aashura) may fast and those who do not wish to do so may omit the fast.[17]"

According to another narration, Hadhrat Aa'isha ؓ mentions that the Quraysh used to fast on the day of Aashura during the period of ignorance. Rasulullaah ﷺ also observed this fast. When Rasulullaah ﷺ migrated to Madinah, he continued observing this fast and also instructed the Muslims to do so. However, when the fasts of Ramadhaan were made compulsory, the instruction to fast on the day of Aashura was repealed. Thereafter, whoever wished to fast fasted and whoever did not wish to fast did not fast[18].

Hadhrat Rubayyi bint Mu'awwidh ؓ reports that on the morning of the day of Aashura, Rasulullaah ﷺ had an announcement made in all the quarters of the Ansaar that whoever had already eaten or drunk anything should complete the day (without eating and drinking) and whoever had not yet had anything to eat or drink should fast for the day. She reports further that they all fasted and also made their children fast. Whenever their children cried for food, they distracted them with woollen toys until sunset[19]. According to a narration of Muslim (Vol. 1 Pg. 360), they also took their children to the Masjid.

Hadhrat Salama bin Akwa ؓ narrates that on the day of Aashura Rasulullaah ﷺ sent a person to announce, "Whoever has eaten should complete the day (without eating) and whoever has not eaten should fast."[20] These narrations make it clear that the fast of the day of Aashura used to be compulsory.

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[16] Durrul Mukhtaar Vol. 2 Pg. 91.
[17] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 217.
[18] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 254 & 268.
[19] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 263.
[20] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 257 & 268.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ reports that when Rasulullaah ﷺ came to Madinah, he noticed that the Jews fasted on the day of Aashura. When he asked them the reason for this, they replied, "This is a great day. It was on this day that Allaah ﷻ delivered the Bani Israa'eel from their enemy. On this day Allaah ﷻ granted victory to Hadhrat Moosa ﷺ and the Bani Israa'eel. We fast because of the distinction of this day." Rasulullaah ﷺ then said to the Jews, "We are closer to Hadhrat Moosa ﷺ than you." Rasulullaah ﷺ also observed this fast and instructed the Muslims to follow suit.[21]

Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari ﷺ states that when Rasulullaah ﷺ arrived in Madinah, he discovered that some Jews commemorated the day of Aashura and also fasted on this day. They regarded this day as a day of celebration. Rasulullaah ﷺ said that the Muslims are more deserving of the fast on this day and he instructed the Muslims to fast on this day[22].

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ also mentioned that among all the fasts that are more virtuous than the rest, he did not see Rasulullaah ﷺ attach more importance to or look more forward to any fast more than the fast of the day of Aashura and those of Ramadhaan[23]. This hadith makes it clear that the fast of the day of Aashura and the fasts of Ramadhaan are accorded precedence over all other fasts and Rasulullaah ﷺ was particular about observing them.

When Hadhrat Ameer Mu'aawiya ﷺ was travelling from Hajj, he happened to be in Madinah on the day of Aashura. Standing on the Mimbar (pulpit) of Rasulullaah ﷺ, he addressed the people stating, "O people of Madinah! Where are your Ulema? I have heard Rasulullaah ﷺ say, 'This is the day of Aashura. Allaah ﷻ has not made its fast compulsory for you. I am fasting, so whoever wants to fast may do so and whoever does not want to fast need not fast.'"[24]

Hadhrat Ash'ath bin Qais ﷺ narrates that he once visited Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ on the day of Aashura and found him eating. Seeing him arrive, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ called to him, "Come and join me for lunch, O Abu Muhammad." Hadhrat Ash'ath ﷺ said, "Is today not the day of Aashura?" Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ asked him, "Do you know what is the day of Aashura?" When Hadhrat Ash'ath ﷺ asked to be informed, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ said, "This is a day in which Rasulullaah ﷺ used to fast before the fasts of Ramadhaan were made Fardh. When the fasts of Ramadhaan were made compulsory, this fast was omitted."[25] This has been reported from Hadhrat Jaabir bin Samura ﷺ and Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar ﷺ as well. Imaam Nawawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned that the jurists of the Ummah are unanimous about the fact that the fast of the day of Aashura is not Fardh but Mustahab (optional).

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[21] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 268 & 562.
[22] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 268 & 562.
[23] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 268.
[24] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pg. 268.
[25] Muslim Vol. 1 Pg. 358.

The Reward for Fasting on the day of Aashura

Hadhrat Abu Qataadah ﷺ narrated that Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "I have strong hope that Allaah ﷻ will forgive the previous year's sins for fasting on the day of Aashura."[26] The sins referred to here are minor sins. Taubah is required to secure forgiveness for major sins.

The Method of Fasting on the day of Aashura

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ narrates that Rasulullaah ﷺ fasted on the day of Aashura and instructed the Muslims to fast as well. When the Muslims told Rasulullaah ﷺ that the Jews and the Christians revere this day, he replied, "If I am alive next year, Insha Allaah I shall fast on the ninth as well." However, Rasulullaah ﷺ passed away before the next year.[27]

Hadhrat Hakam bin A'raj (Rahmatullaahi Alay) narrates that he once came to Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ while he was reclining on a shawl near the well of Zamzam. He then asked Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ, "Tell me how I should observe the fast of the day of Aashura?" Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ replied, "When you see the moon of Muharram, count the days and then fast on the morning of the ninth day." When asked whether Rasulullaah ﷺ fasted in this manner, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ replied in the affirmative.[28]

According to another hadith, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ said that Rasulullaah ﷺ instructed them to fast on the tenth.[29] Yet another narration of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ states that he said, "Fast on the ninth and tenth, thereby opposing the Jews."[30]

All the above narrations make it clear that the preferred method of fasting for the day of Aashura is to fast on the 9th and 10th of Muharram. When Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ told Hadhrat Hakam bin A'raj (Rahmatullaahi Alay) that fasting on the 9th was the way Rasulullaah ﷺ fasted, he meant that if Rasulullaah ﷺ lived longer, he would have fasted on the 9th as well because he had intended to do so. Although Rasulullaah ﷺ really did not fast on the 9th, his desire to do so is as good as him doing it. Allaah ﷻ knows best.

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[26] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 151. Imaam Tirmidhi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) states that this is the only hadith he knows that mentions this virtue. This is also the opinion of Imaam Ahmad (Rahmatullaahi Alay) and Is'haaq (Rahmatullaahi Alay).
[27] Muslim Vol. 1 Pg. 359.
[28] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 158. This hadith is sound.
[29] Tahaawi and Bayhaqi narrate this hadith with a reliable chain of narrators, as mentioned in "Tuhfatul Ah'wadhi".
[30] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 158.

There is another hadith reported by Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ﷺ which is famously quoted in many books of Ahadeeth. The narration is from Muhammad Ibn Abi Layla and it says that Rasulullaah ﷺ mentioned, "Fast on the day of Aashura but oppose the Jews by fasting a day before or a day after."[31] According to this narration, a person may fast either on the 9th and 10th or on the 10th and 11th of Muharram. However, the narrator Muhammad Ibn Abi Layla has been classified as a weak narrator, a factor which weakens the status of the hadith. Ibn Rajab Hambali (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned that the word "or" towards the end of this hadith could indicate a doubt in the narrator's mind. This means that the narrator could be unsure whether Rasulullaah ﷺ said "a day before" or "a day after". Ibn Rajab (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also mentioned those Ahadeeth that contain the word "and" instead of the word "or". These narrations therefore mention that one should fast on three days, viz. the 9th, 10th and 11th of Muharram.

An examination of the various narrations seems to reveal that there are discrepancies in the various copies of Imaam Ahmad (Rahmatullaahi Alay)'s "Musnad". Whereas Haafidh Ibn Hajar (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has quoted the hadith with the word "or" in his books "Fat'hul Baari" and "Talkheesul Habeer", the book "Naylul Awtaar" reports the hadith with the word "and". Quoting from "Jam'ul Fawaa'id", the book "Khutubaatul Ahkaam" also narrates the hadith with the word "and". In a like manner, while some narrations of Bayhaqi contain the word "or', other narrations of the same hadith contain the word "and".[32]

If it is assumed that the correct word is "and", as Ibn Rajab (Rahmatullaahi Alay) feels, then the fact is established that one should fast for three days. It is with this in mind that Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned the following in his footnotes of Tirmidhi, titled "Lam'aat": "With regard to the fast on the day of Aashura, there are three ranks, viz. (1) on the 9th, 10th and 11th, which is the best method of fasting, (2) on the 9th and 10th and (3) on the 10th only. There are several Ahadeeth to substantiate fasting on the 9th and 10th. Fasting on the 10th and 11th holds no status at all, while it is not Sunnah to fast only on the 9th.[33]

According to the canonical work "Durrul Mukhtaar"[34], it is Makrooh Tanzihi to fast on the 10th only. (i.e. excluding the day before or the day after)

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[31] Musnad Ahmad Vol. 1 Pg. 241, Tahaawi, Bayhaqi, Bazzaar and others.
[32] Lataa'iful Ma'aarif by Ibn Rajab Hambali (Rahmatullaahi Alay) Pg. 108.
[33] Tirmidhi Vol. 1 Pg. 157 (footnotes).
[34] Vol. 2 Pg. 91.(Rashidia)

NOTE: The above discussion makes it clear that the Shari'ah dislikes that the Ibaadah of Muslims should resemble the Ibaadah of the Jews and Christians. This is the reason why fasting only on the 10th is Makrooh. Although Rasulullaah ﷺ fasted only on the 10th, he had intended to oppose the ways of the Jews. There should therefore be some sort of opposing (their practice), whether it be by fasting a day before or after.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas ؓ narrates that Rasulullaah ﷺ used to allow his hair to fall without making a path, as was the practice of the Ahlul Kitaab. The Mushrikeen, however, used to make paths in their hair. Rasulullaah ﷺ used to prefer resembling the Ahlul Kitaab in those matters concerning which Allaah ﷻ did not specifically instruct him. However, Rasulullaah ﷺ later started making a path through his hair.[35] It proves that in this matter Rasulullaah ﷺ was instructed to oppose the Ahlul Kitaab just as he was instructed to oppose them concerning the fast of the day of Aashura. One should therefore not fast only on the 10th.

Spending Freely on One's Family

Is it commendable to spend freely on one's family during the day of Aashura or not? There is a group of Ulema who are of the opinion that this practice is unfounded. They maintain that the hadith substantiating this practice is unreliable. However, this standpoint of theirs is neither sound nor rational. It is a case of swaying to extremities. Judicious Muhadditheen are of the opinion that the hadith in this regard is reliable. This practice is therefore commendable. Allaama Sakhaawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has approved of this hadith in his book "Al Maqaasidul Hasana".

The hadith is narrated by Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ؓ, who mentions that Rasulullaah ﷺ said:

من وسع علي عياله في يوم عاشوراء وسع الله عليه السنة كلها.

{TRANSLATION: "Allaah ﷻ will grant prosperity throughout the year to the person who spends freely on his family on the day of Aashura."}

[35] Bukhari Vol. 1 Pgs. 503 & 562.

Tabraani, Bayhaqi and Abu Sheikh have all narrated this hadith from Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ﷺ. Tabraani and Bayhaqi have also narrated it from Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R.A), while Bayhaqi reports narrations of this hadith from Hadhrat Jaabir ﷺ and Hadhrat Abu Hurayra ﷺ as well. Although the chains of narrators of these Ahadeeth are not reliable, their sheer numbers lend strength to them.[36]

The actual text of Imaam Sakhaawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay)'s "Al Maqaasidul Hasana" is as follows:

حديث {١١٩٣}: من وسع علي عياله في يوم عاشوراء وسع الله عليه السنة كلها.

رواه الطبراني ، والبيهقي في الشعب وفضائل الأوقات ، وأبو الشيخ ،عن ابن مسعود والأولان فقط عن أبي سعيد ، والثاني فقط في الشعب عن جابر و أبي هريرة ، وقال انّ أسانيده كلها ضعيفة ،ولكن اذا ضمّ بعضها الي بعض أفاد قوة. بل قال العراقي في أماليه : لحديث أبي هريرة طرق صحح بعضها ابن ناصر الحافظ ، وأورده ابن الجوزي في الموضوعات من طريق سليمان بن أبي عبد الله ، وقال : سليمان مجهول ، وسليمان ذكره ابن حبان في الثقات ، فالحديث حسن علي رأيه. قال : وله طريق عن جابر علي شرط مسلم ، أخرجها ابن عبد البر في الاستذكار من رواية أبي الزبير عنه ، وهي أصح طرقه .ورواه هو والدارقطني في الأفراد بسند جيد عن عمر موقوفا عليه ، والبيهقي في الشعب من جهة محمد بن المنتشر ، قال : كان يقال فذكره ، قال : وقد جمعت طرقه في جزء. قلت واستدرك عليه شيخنا رحمه الله كثيراً لم يذكره وتعقب اعتماد ابن الجوزي في الموضوعات قول العقيلي في هيصم بن شداخ راوي ابن مسعود انّه مجهول بقوله بل ذكره ابن حبان في الثقات والضعفاء (المقاصد الحسنة للسخاوي ص٦٧٤)

In his book "Maa Thabata Bis Sunnah", Hadhrat Shah Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has quoted the above dissertation of Imaam Sakhaawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay). He has also quoted the following discussion of Haafidh Zaynud Deen Iraqi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) who says, "This hadith has some weakness although Ibn Hibbaan (Rahmatullaahi Alay) regards it to be an authentic hadith. There is also another version of this hadith, which Haafidh Abul Fadhl Muhammad bin Naasir (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has passed as authentic. From what Imaam Bayhaqi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) says, it appears as if the hadith about spending freely on one's family is authentic according to other Muhadditheen besides Ibn Hibbaan. This is evident from the fact that he has narrated this hadith from many

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[36] Al Maqaasidul Hasanah Pg. 674.

Sahabah رضي الله عنهم who all narrate from Rasulullaah ﷺ. He has also mentioned that although the chains of narrators of these Ahadeeth are not reliable, their sheer numbers lend strength to them. As for Allaama Ibn Taymiyyah (Rahmatullaahi Alay) who rejects this hadith and says that nothing of the sort was reported from Rasulullaah ﷺ, this is his misunderstanding. When Imaam Ahmad (Rahmatullaahi Alay) stated that this hadith is not authentic, he most probably meant that the hadith is itself not perfectly reliable. However, he did not refute the fact that the hadith may receive credibility because of other factors. After all, a hadith that becomes reliable because of other factors can also be regarded as a legitimate proof."[37]

In his commentary of "Durrul Mukhtaar", Allaama Shaami (Rahmatullaahi Alay) writes, "The hadith concerning spending freely on one's family is authentic, as Haafidh Suyuti (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned in his book 'Ad Durar'. However, the narration about applying kohl (antimony) on the day of Aashura is a fabrication, as Allaama Sakhaawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned with conviction in 'Al Maqaasidul Hasana'. Mulla Ali Qaari (Rahmatullaahi Alay) supports this view in his book 'Kitaabul Mowdu'aat'. In his book 'Durar Muntashira' Allaama Suyuti (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has quoted Haakim as saying that this narration is Munkar. In his book 'Kashful Khifaa', Imaam Jarraahi has quoted Haakim as stating that no narration has been reported from Rasulullaah ﷺ about applying kohl on the day of Aashura. Doing so is regarded as a Bid'ah (innovation)."[38]

Correction of Beliefs

The virtues of the day of Aashura, its importance and the reason for its significance have already come to your knowledge. The reason is that Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام and the Bani Israa'eel were rescued from Fir'oun and his army on this day. As a token of gratitude, Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام fasted on this day. In emulation, Rasulullaah ﷺ also fasted on this day and instructed the Muslims to do the same. While the compulsion to fast on this day has been waived, the fast has still been retained in the Shari'ah as an optional but highly commendable deed. It is perhaps because of this same incident that people are encouraged to spend freely on their families on this day. Allaah ﷻ knows best.

[37] Maa Thabata bis Sunnah Pg. 17.
[38] Shaami Vol. 2 Pg. 124.

A Grave Misconception

Because of misleading propaganda, many people believe that the significance of Muharram and Aashura is linked to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Husain ﷛. This belief is erroneous. The Shari'ah of Rasulullaah ﷺ was perfected during his very lifetime. How can any aspect of the Shari'ah then pivot on an incident that took place long after the demise of Rasulullaah ﷺ? In fact, it occurred many years after the period of the four Khulafa Raashideen (the four righteous Khalifs).

Without doubt, the martyrdom of Hadhrat Husain ﷛ was an extremely painful and tragic incident. However, Islaam does not permit fanatical mourning because Islaam is not a religion of mourning. Every page of Islaamic history is filled with the blood of martyrs. If Muslims were required to mourn the death of every martyr, their every day of the year would be occupied with mourning. Among the many illustrious martyrs of Islaam were Hadhrat Umar ﷛, Hadhrat Uthmaan ﷛ and Hadhrat Ali ﷛. In fact, before them was the martyrdom of the "leader of all martyrs" Hadhrat Hamza ﷛. Many Sahabah ﷛ were also martyred during the tragedies of the battle of Muta, Bir Ma'oona and the battle of Rajee. These incidents were not only tragedies for the Muslims, but even Rasulullaah ﷺ was extremely hurt by them. How can a Muslim forget all these and many more tragedies and remember only the incident of Hadhrat Husain ﷛?

Rather than engaging in bereavement, Islaam encourages Muslims to sacrifice their lives and wealth for the Deen. As Muslims, we have to think about what we have sacrificed for Deen when all these illustrious souls laid down their very lives?

In his book "Maa Thabata bis Sunnah", Shah Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) quotes the following extract from the book "Kitaabus Sawaa'iq", which was written by the Egyptian Sheikh Ibn Hajar Haythami (Rahmatullaahi Alay), who was a renowned Mufti of Makkah Mukarramah and one of the leading jurists and Muhadditheen of his era. He writes, "One should remember that what happened to Hadhrat Husain ﷛ on the day of Aashura was that he was martyred. This means that Allaah ﷻ had elevated his status and reunited him with the other members of Rasulullaah ﷺ's pure family. If anyone thinks of the tragedy that occurred on this day, he should recite 'Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon'. By doing so, he will be obeying Allaah ﷻ's command and will attain the reward that Allaah ﷻ has promised for those who recite 'Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon' when a tragedy occurs. Concerning such people, Allaah ﷻ has mentioned,[39] **'These are the ones upon whom the collective and special mercies of Allaah descend and these are the ones who are rightly guided.'"**

[39] Surah Baqara, verse 157.

He further writes, "On this day of Aashura, one should engage only in good deeds such as fasting and should specifically avoid the baseless innovations that the Shias and Rawaafidh practice. Some of these misleading practices include excessive wailing, mourning and crying. These are not among the practices of Muslims. If it were, then the day on which Rasulullaah ﷺ passed away would have been more deserving of bereavement. Muslims should also avoid the practices of the Nawaasib, who are the enemies of Rasulullaah ﷺ's family. Such people are ignorant. They oppose falsehood with falsehood, Bid'ah with Bid'ah and evil with evil. In opposition to mourning, they make the day a day of rejoicing and celebration. On this day, they adorn themselves, apply henna and kohl, wear new clothing and spend their wealth very liberally. They also prepare elaborate meals that are not prepared on other days. They regard these practices as Sunnah practices and have made them customary. However, they are actually opposing the Sunnah because none of these practices have been reported from Rasulullaah ﷺ."

"When the scholars of Fiqh (Islaamic jurisprudence) and Ahadeeth were asked about applying henna and kohl, about wearing new clothes, about taking a bath and expressing joy on the day of Aashura, they made it clear that no narration has every proven that these acts were practised by Rasulullaah ﷺ. Neither the Sahabah ؓ nor the Imaams of Fiqh or any other scholar ever regarded such practices as being Mustahab (commendable) for this day. There is neither any authentic or weak narration in this regard reported in any of the reliable Islaamic books. Among the many virtues cited about this day, the narration concerning spending freely on one's family has been established from the Ahadeeth. However, comments have been made about the authenticity of its chain of narrators. The famous virtues of the day of Aashura that are all **fabrications** are:

- That the person applying kohl on this day will not have any pain in the eyes for the entire year.
- That the person who baths on this day will not suffer any illness for the year.
- That there is a special salaah to be performed on this day.
- That the repentance of Hadhrat Aadam عليه السلام was accepted on this day.
- That the ark of Hadhrat Nooh عليه السلام settled on Mount Judi on this day.
- That Hadhrat Ibraheem عليه السلام was saved from the fire on this day.
- That on this day Allaah ﷻ sent the ram to be sacrificed in place of Hadhrat Isma'eel عليه السلام.
- That on this day Allaah ﷻ returned Hadhrat Yusuf عليه السلام to his father Hadhrat Ya'qoob عليه السلام.

Because of their ignorance, the Nawaasib regard the day of Aashura as a day of celebration whereas the Rawaafidh regard it to be a day of grief and bereavement. Both these attitudes oppose the Sunnah. Thus have the Scholars of Ahadeeth stated."[40]

It is therefore evident that the above are all fabrications, save for the narration concerning spending freely on one's family. The details of this hadith have already passed (Pg.15). Allaama Ibn Qayyim (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also made it clear that the narrations about applying kohl, oil, perfume and other things specifically on the day of Aashura have all been concocted.[41]

Shah Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also quoted another narration which Sheikh Ali bin Muhammad Ibn Arraaq (Rahmatullaahi Alay)[42] has classified as a **fabricated** hadith. The fabricated hadith states that the person who fasts on the day of Aashura will receive the reward of fasting for sixty years and for standing in salaah for sixty years. In addition to this, he will also receive the rewards of ten thousand angels and the rewards of a thousand people performing Hajj and Umrah. He will also receive the rewards of ten thousand martyrs together with all the rewards of the seven heavens. This **fabricated** hadith also states that the person who feeds a hungry person on the day of Aashura will receive the reward of feeding every poor person from the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ to his fill. Furthermore it states that the person who on this day places his hand on the head of an orphan will have his status in Jannah raised by a degree for every strand of the orphan's hair that falls beneath his hand. The other false impressions that the fabrication creates is that Allaah ﷻ created the creation on the day of Aashura, including the heavens, the earth, the pen, the Lowhul Mahfoodh, Hadhrat Jibra'eel عليه السلام, Hadhrat Mika'eel عليه السلام and Hadhrat Aadam عليه السلام. It also states that Hadhrat Ibraheem عليه السلام was born on this day, that he was rescued from the fire on this day, that the ram was sent in place of Hadhrat Isma'eel عليه السلام on this day, that Fir'oun was drowned on this day, that Hadhrat Idrees عليه السلام was raised to the heavens on this day and that Hadhrat Aadam عليه السلام's repentance was accepted on this day. Moreover, it states that Hadhrat Dawood عليه السلام was forgiven on this day, that Allaah ﷻ focuses His attention to His throne on this day and that Qiyaamah shall take place on this day. Allaama Ibn Jowzi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also stated that this hadith has been concocted by a person called Habeeb Ibn Abi Habeeb and attributed to Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas رضي الله عنه.[43]

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[40] Maa Thabata bis Sunnah Pg. 16.
[41] Maa Thabata bis Sunnah Pg. 17.
[42] From his book "Tanzi'atush Shari'atul Marfu'ah Anil Ahadeethil Mowdoo'ah".
[43] Maa Thabata bis Sunnah Pg. 20

After mentioning all of the above, Hadhrat Shah Abdul Haqq (Rahmatullaahi Alay) quotes another **fabrication**. This fabrication states that on this day Hadhrat Yusuf عليه السلام was freed from prison, Hadhrat Ya'qoob عليه السلام's eyesight was restored, Hadhrat Ayyoob عليه السلام was cured and Hadhrat Yunus عليه السلام was removed from the belly of the fish. It also states that on this day the past and future mistakes of Rasulullaah ﷺ were forgiven, the repentance of Hadhrat Yunus عليه السلام's nation was accepted and the first rains fell. In addition to this, the "hadith" states that the person who fasts on the day of Aashura shall have forty years of his sins forgiven and that the day of Aashura was the first creation of Allaah ﷻ. It states that the person who fasts on this day will be rewarded like one who fasts all the time and the person who stands in Ibaadah during the night preceding the day of Aashura will receive the reward of the Ibaadah of everything within the seven heavens. Furthermore, it states that all the Ambiya fasted on this day and that fifty years of a person's future sins and fifty years of his past sins will be forgiven if on this day he performs four rakaat salaah and recites Surah Faatiha once, followed by Surah Ikhlaas (Surah 112) fifty times in every rakaat. In addition to this, the "hadith" states that such a person will have a thousand pulpits of Noor (celestial light) erected for him in the highest echelons of the heavens. It also asserts that the person who gives a single sip to another to drink on this day, his status will be like one who has not disobeyed Allaah ﷻ for even a moment as brief as the blink of an eye. It says also that one who feeds a poor person to his fill on this day will cross over the bridge of Siraat with the speed of lightning. Another concocted detail of this "hadith" is where it states that the person who gives charity on this day is like one who never refuses any beggar and someone who passes his hand over the head of an orphan will be rewarded like one who has behaved kindly to every orphan among mankind. In a similar fashion, it states that whoever visits a sick person on this day will be equal to one who has visited every sick person from among mankind.

Allaama Ibn Jowzi (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned that this narration has certainly been **fabricated** although its chain of narrators include all reliable narrators. It is therefore obvious that whoever concocted this "hadith" attached a reliable chain of narrators to it.[44]

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[44] Maa Thabata bis Sunnah Pg. 21.

Will Qiyaamah Take Place on the Day of Aashura?

An authentic hadith reported in Tirmidhi (Pg. 110) states that Qiyaamah will take place on a Friday. However, no authentic hadith says that this Friday will fall on the 10th of Muharram (i.e. the day of Aashura). It is probably because Hadhrat Shah Rafee'ud Deen (Rahmatullaahi Alay) had mentioned in his book "Zalzalatus Saa'a" that Qiyaamah will occur on the day of Aashura that this belief has become common. Mufti Kifaayatullaah (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has also mentioned this in his book "Ta'leemul Islaam" and many others have also followed suit.

Although Allaama Anwar Shah Kashmeeri (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has mentioned in his discourses of Bukhari that this belief is substantiated by an authentic hadith, Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Binori (Rahmatullaahi Alay) asserts that he has never come across such a hadith.[45]

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Uthmaani (Daamat Barakaatuh) has mentioned that this hadith is a fabrication. A hadith of this nature has been classified as a fabrication by Sheikh Ali bin Muhammad Ibn Arraaq (Rahmatullaahi Alay)[46] and by Allaama Suyuti (Rahmatullaahi Alay).[47] A person called Habeeb Ibn Abi Habeeb has concocted it.

The same hadith has been quoted on Pg. 259 of the book "Tambeehul Ghaafileen" and the commentator has indicated that Habeeb Ibn Abi Habeeb has fabricated the hadith.

It has therefore been established that no authentic hadith states that Qiyaamah will occur on the day of Aashura. A hadith does however state that besides man and Jinn, all living creatures wait in apprehension for the Day of Qiyaamah every Friday. They are only contented when they see the sun rise (of the next day).[48]

It is perhaps because of this that Rasulullaah ﷺ used to recite Surah Alif Laam Meem Sajdah (Surah 32) and Surah Dahar (Surah 76) in the Fajr salaah every Friday. These two Surahs mention the creation of Hadhrat Aadam عليه السلام and the occurrence of Qiyaamah. Therefore, by reciting these Surahs, people are reminded about Qiyaamah. Of course, Allaah ﷻ knows best the reasons for everything.

[45] Ma'aarifus Sunan Vol. 4 Pg. 306.

[46] In his book "Tanzi'atush Shari'atul Marfu'ah Anil Ahadeethil Mowdoo'ah" Vol. 2 Pg.149.

[47] In his book "Al La'aalil Masnoo'ah" Vol. 2 Pg. 108.

[48] Mishkaat Pg. 120.

Conclusion

Everything said above has made it evident that the day of Aashura is especially important because it was the day in which Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام and the Bani Israa'eel were saved while Fir'oun and his army were drowned. It is also because of this that the fast is observed on this day. Everything else pertaining to its importance is unfounded. No injunction of the Shari'ah pertaining to this day is related to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Husain رضي الله عنه. There are no special salaahs to be performed and no special foods that have to be prepared either.

Although Allaama Ibn Katheer (Rahmatullaahi Alay) has recorded a narration in his Tafseer stating that the ark of Hadhrat Nooh عليه السلام settled on Mount Judi on the day of Aashura, he has added that this narration is "Ghareeb". As noticed in many of his comments, when Allaama Ibn Katheer (Rahmatullaahi Alay) classifies a hadith as "Ghareeb", he means that the hadith should be disregarded. We will therefore suffice only with what has been stated in authentic Ahadeeth.

May Allaah ﷻ grant the Ummah the ability to remain steadfast on the Qur'aan and Sunnah, remaining aloof from all acts of Bid'ah and all customs. May Allaah ﷻ also guide them to refrain from adding baseless beliefs and injunctions to the Shari'ah. May Allaah ﷻ's choicest blessings and mercies be showered on our leader Rasulullaah ﷺ, his family and all his Companions . All praises are definitely for Allaah ﷻ alone. Aameen.

Fazlur Rahman Azmi (Daamat Barakaatuh)
10 Shabaan 1421 (7 November 2000)



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